

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5569

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1262

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS

SUBJ: ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CONCERNED OVER CONGRESSIONAL BRIBERY
INVESTIGATIONS

1. DURING WEEKLY EARLY-MORNING GOLF MATCH, ASSEMBLY SPEAKER
CHUNG IL KWON WAS CALLED FROM COURSE FOR URGENT CONSULTATION.
HE SHOWED UP LATER FOR BREAKFAST, EXPLAINING THAT CONSULTA-
TION HAD BEEN WITH VICE FONMIN LHO SHIN YONG.

2. CHUNG SAID LHO HAD INFORMED HIM THAT FURTHER SHAKE-UP
OF FOREIGN MINISTRY PERSONNEL WOULD BE ANNOUNCED THIS
WEEK AND THAT LHO HIMSELF WOULD PROBABLY BE REPLACED BY
EITHER CHANG SANG-MUN, NOW AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO, OR YUN
HA-CHONG, NOW MINISTER IN ROK EMBASSY, TOKYO. CHUNG'S
MOOD HAD CHANGED PERCEPTIVELY, HOWEVER, AND HIS NEXT
QUESTION MAY HAVE INDICATED WHAT HE HAD REALLY DISCUSSED
WITH LHO. HE ASKED DCM IF HE COULD SUPPLY ANY DETAILS
REGARDING REPORTS OF FBI INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED
BRIBERY OF AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN BY PERSONS ASSOCIATED
WITH ROKG. HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ONLY
SKETCHY ACCOUNTS OF THESE REPORTS BUT APPEARED SUFFI-
CIENTLY IMPRESSED BY THEIR SERIOUSNESS TO COMPLAIN
BITTERLY THAT WASHINGTON POST SEEMS DETERMINED TO
DISRUPT U.S. RELATIONS WITH JAPAN AND KOREA. DCM
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SAID HE WOULD PROVIDE CHUNG WITH COPIES OF WASHINGTON

POST AND OTHER PRESS ARTICLES.

3. DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO CHUNG'S PROSPECTS FOR RE-

ELECTION AS ASSEMBLY SPEAKER. CHUNG SAID HE INTENDED TO SERVE IN ASSEMBLY FOR THREE MORE YEARS BUT THAT HE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED ANY INDICATION AS TO WHETHER "THE BOSS" WOULD WISH TO HAVE HIM REMAIN AS SPEAKER. CHUNG THEN ASKED ASSEMBLYMAN MIN KI-SHIK WHO HE THOUGHT WOULD BE NOMINATED. MIN SQUIRMED IN HIS SEAT AND REPLIED "YOU?"

4. COMMENT: CHUNG REMAINED QUITE ILL-AT-EASE AND DISTRACTED THROUGHOUT THIS CONVERSATION. WHILE HE HAS FREQUENTLY DISCLAIMED ANY FURTHER POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND HAS MADE POINT OF SAYING HE DOES NOT CARE WHETHER HE IS RETURNED AS SPEAKER OR NOT, HE OBVIOUSLY HAS MUCH AT STAKE. AS OFFICIAL HOST TO STREAM OF CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS WHICH HAS PASSED THROUGH SEOUL DURING PAST YEAR AND WHICH HAS INCLUDED CONGRESSMEN REPORTEDLY UNDER INVESTIGATION AS WELL AS OTHER INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED IN PRESS ARTICLES, CHUNG MAY FEEL HE HAS SOME BASIS FOR CONCERN.
SNEIDER

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